

U.S. Rep. Jo Bonner, R-Alabama, who represents Alabama's Gulf Coast, is an original cosponsor of the Oil Spill Response and Assistance Act to increase the cap on liability for economic damages resulting from oil spills, and to require the U.S. Coast Guard to develop technology to promptly and adequately respond to major oil spills.

"While the cause, environmental impact and final cost of the catastrophic oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico have yet to be fully determined, it is already clear that current law and resources are inadequate to address spills of this magnitude," Rep. Bonner said.

"The 1990 Oil Pollution Act's economic damage liability cap of \$75 million is unrealistic, and the lack of an effective federal response to handle this developing spill underscores the need for new planning and technologies to control such events before they become a significant threat.

"I have joined my colleagues, Rep. Roy Blunt, R-Missouri, and Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Florida, in introducing the Oil Spill Response and Assistance Act in the U.S. House to raise the economic damage liability cap to double the 1990 Oil Pollution Act liability limit, or equal to the amount of the responsible party's profits for the last four quarters, depending on which is greater.

"Furthermore, this legislation would give new focus to federal preparedness efforts, requiring the U.S. Coast Guard to develop under sea technology, including improved remotely operated

vehicles, to promptly and effectively cap deep sea wells, and develop flame retardant boom technology capable of surrounding 100 square miles of ocean.

“The Oil Spill Response and Assistance Act also orders a comprehensive study of the response efforts of the current Gulf spill to determine what lessons can be learned from this unfortunate disaster and ensure that response failures are not repeated.”

The Oil Spill Response and Assistance Act (HR 5356) is the companion bill to S. 3375 introduced on May 13 by Senators Jeff Sessions, R-Alabama, Senator Roger Wicker, R-Mississippi and Senator David Vitter, R-Louisiana.